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To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 11/26/01 1:07pm
Subject: Microsoft Anti-trust proposed settlement

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To whom it may concern:

I am a private individual who has recently purchased the third of a series of personal home computers since 1986. I have used them for a combination of personal and business work. I have relied on them extensively over this time period. I am a sales and marketing professional and while I am computer literate, I am not a techie.

Each of these three computers came with the Windows operating systems, the first being Windows 3.1, second Windows 95 and currently Windows XP. Basically the only option I had was between Apple and Microsoft and Apple did not have the business software and widespread acceptance of the Windows platform. Never have these programs worked smoothly, and easily. Inexplicable crashes are common across all three versions - Windows 95 being the most reliable of the three.

I have used both Wordperfect and Microsoft Office products across this same time period as well. While I was working for BFI, the company was basically forced to choose a software program that could be used to communicate across all the hundreds of operating districts. Microsoft Word was chosen since it was the program that would NOT (despite published and apparent software choices to the contrary) accept or convert Wordperfect documents into any readable form. Wordperfect on the other hand, had no problem converting the Word files into readable form and was a superior product in every way. The bundling of Excel was the final straw which was also an inferior product but easier to use than Lotus for non computer people which still relied on the crappy Microsoft DOS too extensively.

I have owned Windows XP for about a week at this point and it is a horrible, buggy, nasty program to use. I do not require exotic uses. The very first time I tried to open a Microsoft Word document (older version) with the new version, the whole Word program froze and I became locked into an endless circle of "Did I want to Notify Microsoft of the problem or not". Neither choice worked.

I called my Dell representative and the Microsoft simulation software was not the same as that supplied by Microsoft to Dell as what I was seeing. I called Microsoft. They refused to help me since I did not purchase the program "retail" but instead it was preinstalled on the computer. For \$35.00, I could possibly be helped. I have been forced to call that number before and the only thing the representatives were successful at was taking my money.

This is total market domination and bullying of the individual. Every "upgrade" is never consumer ready. Every "upgrade" crashes and burns even its own earlier versions. The late '80s version of Wordperfect was superior to Microsoft 2000 but I am stuck using the Microsoft behemoth if I want others to be able to read my work.

I agree that the consumer rarely wins in class action suits. I do not want \$10.00 off my next purchase of ever more cumbersome and useless software. Technical support at no cost to all registered purchasers of their products for three to five years after purchase would represent a genuine help. Their products also need to be transparent to me, the consumer, in that I should be able to use Wordperfect or any other basic word processing software and it should be readable in any Microsoft product as well as vice versa.

If part of the settlement is to provide software and equipment to poor schools, it should all be a competitor's product - either Apple or Windows plus Corel software. They should not be given a boost by the government in penetrating their last remaining niche.

Another gross mistake in their software that directly negatively effects the government and government contractors every day is in their Excel software. The spreadsheets have no way of turning off the estimating factor so even if you preset columns to money and multiply by whole numbers and set the estimating to 2 decimal places, the software will still come up with rounding errors so that all columns must be checked by hand and are often sent back and forth several times when a simple three dollar calculator can do such a function with no problem. Feel free to pay the \$35.00 for technical support who will tell you this cannot be corrected. This multiplied across all the government offices wastes thousands of hours annually in productivity.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (703)-237-1964.

Very truly yours,

Linda Lee